

WHITCHURCH URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL: ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH
FOR THE YEAR 1943.

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to present my sixth annual report.
The Minister of Health has requested that it should be prepared
on lines similar to those of the previous four years dealing
chiefly with subjects of current interest.

Restrictions are to be taken as last year as regards the
publication of population figures etc.

Arrangements are to be made for the preservation of all
records which cannot be published in this report.

Your obedient Servant,

L. WILSON EVANS.

PUBLIC HEALTH STAFF.

<u>Name.</u>	<u>Qualifications.</u>	<u>Office Held.</u>	<u>Whole or Part time.</u>
L. Wilson Evans.	M.B., B.S., L.R.C.P. M.R.C.S., D.P.H.	Medical Officer of Health.	Part.
M. W. Sowden.	M.I.M and Cy.E.	Sanitary Ins- pector and Surveyor.	Whole.

STATISTICS AND LOCAL CONDITIONS OF AREA.

Area of District	5,996 acres.
No. of inhabited houses (end 1943) according to rate book.	1,899
Rateable Value (end of 1943)	£38,937
Sum represented by a penny rate (1943-4).	£151

EXTRACTS FROM VITAL STATISTICS.

Birth Rate per 1,000 population.	19.6
Birth Rate England and Wales.	16.5
Still Birth Rate per 1,000 population.	0.8
Still Birth Rate England and Wales.	0.5
Infant Mortality Rate (deaths of infants under 1 year). per 1,000 births.	58
Infant mortality Rate England & Wales.	49
Death Rate per 1,000 population.	12.4
Death Rate England and Wales.	12.1

Chief Causes of Death.

Heart Disease	M. 11	F. 15	Total	26
Cancer	M. 8	F. 5	Total	13
Bronchitis & Pneumonia	M. 3	F. 6	Total	9
Nephritis	M. 4	F. 3	Total	7

Deaths from Measles	1
Deaths from Whooping Cough	1
Deaths from Diarrhoea under 2 years	Nil
Maternal Deaths	Nil

The state of public health as indicated by the above figures is satisfactory.

There was a considerable increase in the birth rate and the natural increase in the population was 50 compared with 35 last year. The infant mortality figure is lower than the previous two years but is still in excess of that for the Country as a whole. The number of deaths during the first month of life is above the average giving a neo-mortality figure of 36.5. It is gratifying to note that for the third consecutive year no mothers died as a result of childbirth.

PREVALENCE OF AND CONTROL OVER INFECTIOUS AND OTHER DISEASES.

Notification of Infectious Disease.

	Under 1 yr.		1-3		3-5		5-10		10-15		15-25		25-45		45-65 or over		Totals.	
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
Measles	4	1	10	7	4	12	15	20	3	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	36	43
Scarlet Fever.	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	1	1	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	2	4
Whooping Cough.	1	-	-	2	-	1	1	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	6
Diphtheria	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	1	2	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	4	3
Pneumonia	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	1
Erysipelas	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	2	2
Puerperal Pyrexia	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	1

The outbreak of measles which commenced in January appears to have been a continuance of the small one which occurred from August to November of last year. The previous considerable outbreak had been in 1939 and since the periods between outbreaks is usually three or four years this one was to be expected. Fortunately the disease was not of a severe form and although about half of the cases were under 5 years of age there was only one death, a child of a few months who developed pneumonia.

None of the cases of Scarlet Fever went to hospital. This disease nowadays is generally of a very mild form and where it is possible for a case to be nursed and isolated at home that is the best course to pursue except where any member of the household is employed in the preparation or distribution of food, especially milk, or in certain other special circumstances. The problem of dealing with this disease is complicated by the fact that only a proportion of individuals infected develop the rash characteristic of Scarlet Fever with the result that in addition to the cases notified there are others equally infectious suffering from tonsillitis, quinzy or similar conditions.

The reduction in cases of Diphtheria noted in recent years has not been maintained at the same rate, which was disappointing in view of the considerable proportion of children immunised. Immunisation has continued to make progress as the following figures show.

	1941	1942	1943
Under 5 years.	15%	35%	43%
5 - 15 years.	61%	77%	83%

Scabies.

There was no increase in Scabies during the year. 27 cases came to the notice of the Health Department, the same number as last year. 11 were admitted to the Sick Bay. The measures taken to prevent the spread of the disease were generally effective.

TUBERCULOSIS

Respiratory.

Non-Respiratory.

Ages.	New cases.	Admitted to Sanatorium.	Deaths.	New cases.	Deaths.	Hospital.
	M. F	M. F	M. F	M. F	M. F	M. F.
0- 5				1	1	
5-15				1	1	
15-25	1		1	1		
25-35	1	1	1	1		
35-50						
50-65	1		1			
65 or over.						
Totals	2 1	1	2 1	3	3	
	3	1	3	6		

Transfer 1

Number of cases on Register at end of 1943.

<u>Respiratory.</u>		<u>Non-respiratory.</u>	
M.	F.	M.	F.
9	4	9	11
13		20	

The trend in the number of cases of Respiratory Tuberculosis to decrease is continued, the number of cases notified being below the average. On the other hand the non-respiratory cases as noted last year, although fewer, are still considerably over the average.

WATER SUPPLY.

The supply is constant and as mentioned in the Sanitary Inspector's report has been sufficient for all requirements, and, although there have been occasions in the past when consumers have been asked to be careful in the use of water it has never been necessary to restrict the supply. The proportion of dwelling houses supplied directly from the works to the houses is about 95%. The proportion of the population supplied from the works directly to the houses is about 93%. 38,500 gallons a week are supplied to consumers in the Overton Rural District. Owing primarily to a neighbouring authority desiring your Council to join with them in a water supply scheme a good deal of attention has been directed to the water supply. The water is obtained from a number of wells at variable distances up to half a mile from the waterworks, all except five being from bore holes varying from 35 to 70 feet deep. The water from the other five is obtained from shallow chambers and recent samples have shown no evidence of any contamination. The supply from these five chambers and the five boreholes in this region is a comparatively small one, about 1,000 gallons an hour, and this water is not included in the supply as a rule but is a standby in case of shortage. The chlorination of the water has proceeded satisfactorily during the year.

WATER SUPPLY (cont'd).

The residual chlorine is checked daily and samples for bacteriological examination are taken every month. They have been consistently good. The report of one taken in December was as follows:-

Bacillus Coli absent from 100 ml.

Viable bacterial count at 37°C - 2 per ml.

Viable bacterial count at 22°C - 3 per ml.

Bacteriologists remarks:- This is a very satisfactory result and indicates efficient operation of the chlorination process.

There appears to be some prejudice against chlorination but this process is the greatest modern advance in the treatment of water. It is the most up-to-date and efficient method of safeguarding the public health and there need be no objection from taste or appearance. A very large proportion of supplies throughout the Country are chlorinated. A chemical examination was made of the water in November by the County Analyst for the purpose of checking the quantity of iron present and for the degrees of hardness. Chemical analysis is not made as a routine measure as it is practically useless for such purpose. Bacteriological examinations have now replaced chemical as the standard method of judging by laboratory means the purity and safety of a water supply. The iron in solution was shown to be 0.03 parts per 100,000. It is usually considered that water containing 0.04 parts per 100,000 is likely to give cause for objection, but this would be due to discolouration of the water and possibly to an inky or astringent taste, but this amount cannot possibly have any effect on health, very much greater quantities would be necessary for that. However, for the reasons stated the presence of iron is objectionable and this was remedied to a considerable extent before the war, but recently it has been impossible to obtain the filter material and the Council has under consideration methods for reducing the iron as soon as circumstances permit. In the same sample the total hardness was 27.5 parts per 100,000, 24 parts being temporary hardness and 3.5 parts permanent hardness. Waters containing from 20 to 30 parts of hardness are classified as hard waters and those containing over 30 as very hard. The base exchange plant for softening the water which was installed in 1935 to replace the lime process reduced the hardness to 7 parts but in 1940 the material used was found to require renewal, but this was not procurable owing to no supplies being available and at present the reduction of hardness is much less than the Council had considered desirable. For household purposes some softening of the water is desirable but there is no evidence that a hard water is not as wholesome as a soft water, in fact there is a considerable body of opinion in favour of a hard water and many health resorts have a very hard water.

I am satisfied that the water as supplied to the people of Whitchurch is perfectly wholesome and not in the slightest degree detrimental to health although there is room for improvement in the directions indicated. Of this the Council is aware and it has expressed its intention of carrying out alterations as soon as possible.

Meat Inspection.

The arrangement by which the Sanitary Inspectors for Ellesmere Urban, Market Drayton Rural and Wen Urban and Rural Districts carried out inspection at the slaughterhouse was continued and appears to have worked satisfactorily. The erection of lavatory and sanitary accommodation at the slaughterhouse, which was urgently needed, has been commenced.

SANITARY INSPECTOR'S REPORT.

Sanitary Circumstances of the Area.

The total water consumption for the year was 71,442,000 gallons, representing a daily average of 195,700 gallons as compared with a total of 79,884,000 gallons (average 219,000 gallons per day) for the year 1942, showing a decrease of 43,300 gallons per day. No shortages of water nor failure of supplies has been realised during the year, the supply being constant. The householders have been requested to economise in the use of water and inspections have regularly been made to detect any waste or leakages. The water is efficiently chlorinated continuously and a test is regularly made of the chlorine residual in the delivery main from the reservoir.

Rainfall.

The rainfall as recorded at Fenns Bank for the year 1943 was 25.99 inches, as compared with 25.55 inches for the year 1942, an increase of 0.44 inches. The average yearly rainfall recorded for the past 35 years is 28.31 inches.

Scavenging.

The scavenging of house refuse has been carried out satisfactorily during the year and the refuse collected has been deposited on the Council's tips.

The salvage of bottles, scrap iron, bones, rags, etc. and the collection of waste paper and kitchen waste has been proceeded with during the year, and a large quantity disposed of to the various dealers. The usual salvage drives and appeals were held throughout the County on various occasions and brought good results.

Housing.

No new houses have been erected by the Council or by private enterprise during the year.

Housing (Rural Workers) Acts, 1926 and 1938.

No new schemes under this act have been carried out during the year and the total number dealt with under the Acts still remains at 7.

Overcrowding.

Two cases of overcrowding have come under notice during the year, which can be attributed to lodgers being taken in in the one case, and to the house being too small for the resident's family in the other.

Housing Standard.

Despite the changed conditions the housing standard of the district has been maintained throughout the year. No great difficulty has in most cases been experienced in having repairs to dwellings carried out.

Inspection and Supervision of Food.

(a) Milk Supply.

All farms and dairies within the district are frequently inspected and any defects found, including lighting, ventilation, drainage, cleanliness or structural conditions are conveyed to the milk producers either verbally or by notices, with a view to having them remedied.

Number of Tuberculin Tested Milk Sellers in District
at end of year. - 2

MILK.

Number of producers of undesignated milk on register.	32
Number of inspections made.	32
Number of defects found	Nil
Number of preliminary notices served	Nil
Number complied with	-
Number of producers of accredited milk.	
(Wholesalers 18; Retailers 2.)	Total 20.

Number of inspections T.T. and accredited -	36
Number of samples of milk which failed to comply with conditions (according to copies of analysis forwarded by the Public Health Department, Salop County Council).	35

The quality of milk distributed in the area has been good throughout the year, and the cowsheds and dairies have been kept in a good and clean condition.

(b). Meat and other Foods.

Meat. The two Ministry of Food Slaughterhouses are inspected regularly and all carcasses found defective are condemned and disposed of as necessary.

Bakehouses.

The eleven registered bakehouses within the district have been frequently inspected during the year and have been found to be in a clean sanitary condition, with proper ventilation and lighting.

Other places where food is prepared and Shops &c.

Inspections of these premises are regularly made.

(c). Adulteration &c.

The premises licensed under the Food and Drugs Act, 1938, have been inspected and found to be in a satisfactory condition.

Tinned Food inspections have been carried out and any unsound have been disposed of as necessary.